

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- Sub A33
1. A method for initiation of an agreement utilizing a network, comprising the steps of:
- (a) allowing a buyer and a seller to negotiate terms of trade utilizing a network;
 - (b) receiving from the buyer a form indicating the terms of trade utilizing the network;
 - (c) receiving an identifier from the buyer utilizing the network;
 - (d) sending the form to a bank for assessing the credit of the buyer utilizing the network, wherein the bank to which the credit application is sent is based on the identifier;
 - (e) forwarding the form to a seller along with the assessment of the credit of the buyer utilizing the network;
 - (f) allowing the seller to digitally sign the form utilizing the network;
 - (g) receiving the digitally signed form from the seller utilizing the network; and
 - (h) transmitting a notice to the buyer indicating that the digitally signed form has been received from the seller, thus initiating the agreement.

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2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the network includes a wide area network.

1 3. A method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising the step of
2 authenticating an identity of the buyer prior to sending the form to the bank.

1 4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the identity is authenticated by
2 requiring the submission of an identifier and a password.

1 5. A method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising the step of verifying
2 the credit of the seller.

1 6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the form is a combined purchase
2 order proforma invoice.

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4 (a) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for initiation
5 of an agreement utilizing a network, comprising:
6 (a) a code segment for allowing a buyer and a seller to negotiate terms of trade
7 utilizing a network;
8 (b) a code segment for receiving from the buyer a form indicating the terms of
9 trade utilizing the network;
10 (c) a code segment for receiving an identifier from the buyer utilizing the
11 network;
12 (d) a code segment for sending the form to a bank for assessing the credit of the
13 buyer utilizing the network, wherein the bank to which the credit application
14 is sent is based on the identifier;
15 (e) a code segment for forwarding the form to a seller along with the assessment
16 of the credit of the buyer utilizing the network;
17 (f) a code segment for allowing the seller to digitally sign the form utilizing the
18 network;
19 (g) a code segment for receiving the digitally signed form from the seller
20 utilizing the network; and
(h) a code segment for transmitting a notice to the buyer indicating that the
digitally signed form has been received from the seller, thus initiating the
agreement.

1 8. A computer program as recited in claim 7, wherein the network includes a
2 wide area network.

1 9. A computer program as recited in claim 7, and further comprising a code
2 segment for authenticating an identity of the buyer prior to sending the form
3 to the bank.

1 10. A computer program as recited in claim 9, wherein the identity is
2 authenticated by requiring the submission of an identifier and a password.

1 11. A computer program as recited in claim 7, and further comprising a code
2 segment for verifying the credit of the seller.

1 12. A computer program as recited in claim 7, wherein the form is a combined
2 purchase order/proforma invoice.

1 13. A system for initiation of an agreement utilizing a network, comprising:
2 (a) logic for allowing a buyer and a seller to negotiate terms of trade utilizing a
3 network;
4 (b) logic for receiving from the buyer a form indicating the terms of trade
5 utilizing the network;
6 (c) logic for receiving an identifier from the buyer utilizing the network;
7 (d) logic for sending the form to a bank for assessing the credit of the buyer
8 utilizing the network, wherein the bank to which the credit application is sent
9 is based on the identifier;
10 (e) logic for forwarding the form to a seller along with the assessment of the
11 credit of the buyer utilizing the network;
12 (f) logic for allowing the seller to digitally sign the form utilizing the network;
13 (g) logic for receiving the digitally signed form from the seller utilizing the
14 network; and
15 (h) logic for transmitting a notice to the buyer indicating that the digitally signed
16 form has been received from the seller, thus initiating the agreement.

1 14. A system as recited in claim 13, wherein the network includes a wide area
2 network.

1 15. A system as recited in claim 13, and further comprising logic for
2 authenticating an identity of the buyer prior to sending the form to the bank.

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16. A system as recited in claim 15, wherein the identity is authenticated by requiring the submission of an identifier and a password.

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17. A system as recited in claim 13, and further comprising logic for verifying the credit of the seller.

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18. A system as recited in claim 13, wherein the form is a combined purchase order proforma invoice.

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